

# *Imagine...*

## An Attack on Workers' Benefits and Wages

Over the last few years it has become commonplace to hear about egregious attacks on workers' benefits and wages, often employing questionable, if not outright illegal, bargaining protocol. The attacks are on benefits that have been won through decades of collective bargaining, often in lieu of wage increases. The main target has been unionized workers especially, in recent years, those in the public sector where unionization is now the heaviest.

The reason is quite simple – the surplus-value produced by the workers, the sole source of profit, rent, and interest, appropriated by the capitalists has to be split between wages and profits. Each party struggles to increase their share, a basis of the class struggle. Unionized workers, through the power of numbers are more successful than individual workers. To the capitalist, then, unions are an impediment to increasing their share. But, if surplus-value is only produced by human labour working on the products of nature and not through the services provided by the public sector, why the attack on them?

Apart from the fact that all products are social products, i.e., minors, steelworkers, office workers and teachers teaching the next generation of workers all contribute to the auto industry, government and municipal workers are funded out of taxes. Taxes come out of the profit share of the capitalists, not from our wages. How? Wages represent the cost of the workers' purchases necessary to maintain themselves for work the next day, week, or year. This is the workers' net pay, not gross pay. If we paid the



taxes, we simply would not have enough money to recreate ourselves and the capitalist would have a diminished work force. This necessary amount varies according to time and place and level of capitalist development. What we earned in 1912 is not acceptable now. What the Chinese labourer gets is not acceptable here, although it may soon become so if the neo-liberal agenda continues to be successful.

Again, taxes are an impediment to profits and thus there is always pressure from the capitalist class to reduce them. That's why they continually fund organizations like the Citizens' Coalition on Taxes (that used to be headed by prime minister Harper) and use their media to promote tax reduction. Sounds like a good idea, right? Less taxes, more take-home pay. Actually, the worker benefits very little from tax reduction programs and gets reduced services all round while the capitalist class walks away with more profits and large tax cuts. Thus, over the last few decades we have seen decreasing funding to governments at all levels reflected in reduced health care, education funding, municipal services, and social programs, even as society becomes ever wealthier as productivity rises.

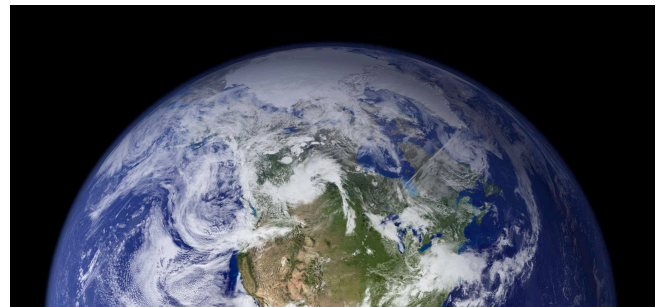
The General Motors meltdown that resulted in massive cuts to wages and benefits and the public sector struggle in Wisconsin are well documented. This year's closing of Electro-Motor (Caterpillar) diesel plant in Ontario is an example of the brazen attack on workers and their unions. The company arrived here in 2008 amid a \$5 million tax break and a photo opportunity for Harper replete in hard-hat at the controls of a new locomotive, just like one of the workers! Electro-Motors 'bargaining' was to offer the workers a fifty per cent wage cut to its welders, assemblers, painters, and crane operators or they would close the plant and move to Muncie,

Indiana where new legislation made for a more 'flexible' work force, i.e. no unions, and collective bargaining be damned. The union was powerless to do anything and the government chose to do nothing. The company held a job fair in Muncie advertising \$14.50 per hour for welders, and \$12 per hour for assemblers, approximately half of what they had been paying in Ontario. They also advertised for a manager qualified in human resources and 'experienced with providing a union-free culture and union avoidance', just in case there was any doubt about their intentions.

In Toronto, negotiations between the city and the Canadian Union of Public Employees became a test case on American-style bargaining and the art of restricting union influence. Deputy mayor, Doug Holiday remarked, "It's the defining experience in our city's recent history." (Toronto Star, 5/Feb/2012). The city's collective bargaining style was aggressive and unprecedented but not totally unexpected given the rhetoric of mayor Robert Ford who has consistently bashed unions since his election. The workers were warned that the city would jettison their contracts if an agreement was not forthcoming. The conditions proposed were to surrender job security for those with less than twenty-two years service; reduce benefits such as sick pay, optical and dental programs; remove third-party grievance procedures, leaving the employer as the final arbiter; the city no longer will collect union dues. Outsourcing union work was another issue.

In all cases mentioned it was the style and language and demands of the employers that shocked the labour community. What we can learn from all this is that any gains workers have made, some going back decades, are subject to revocation at any time, for any reason. The Socialist Party of Canada pursues a policy of replacing capitalism rather than trying to make it work in the workers' interests, an impossible dream. In times of recession, unions have little power to resist employers' demands – a surplus of labour on the market necessarily cheapens labour-power and as manufacturing jobs in general and unionized jobs in particular decline, the collective power of labour also declines leaving the neo-liberal policies of the major parties and governments to move forward – less spending on health, education, and social programs, a compliant work force on contracts with no benefits, reduced labour and environmental laws, etc. Marx was right in saying

that unions do a good job of deflecting the worst aspects of capitalism in fighting rear-guard actions, even though their victories are often fleeting, but they can never be mechanisms for revolutionary action to replace capitalism. Action must be political. We must elect a majority of Socialist MPs and use that majority to legally enact laws to establish socialism and end the reliance of job security and living standards on the whims of capital and on the begrudging and miserly cooperation of employers. This cycle of gains in boom times and losses in recessions binds the workers into a continual and ultimately losing struggle. It is capitalism that must be defeated and power must be put into the hands of all people through democratically administered common ownership of the means of producing and distributing wealth. Act politically now! Join the Socialist Party of Canada and become active!



## Changes? What Changes?

The very nature of capitalism, including production with a view to profit and, conversely no production without profit when markets become glutted, inevitably causes problems for everyone. Unemployment is exacerbated by technological advances, making not merely jobs, but whole industries redundant. In a sane society this would be cause for rejoicing as everyone's hours could be reduced but the benefits in capitalism accrue to the individual owners, not the whole of society.

Today we have a situation where capitalism shows itself to be plainly ridiculous, where nearly everyone in the world is drowning in debt. Nowhere is this more evident than in Greece, a country many call the homeland of democracy, though since slavery prevailed in ancient Greece and women were disenfranchised, one wonders just how democratic it was. In the June election, the working class in Greece voted, not for

socialism, but for a continuation of capitalism, or, to be more specific, by returning the so-called Democracy Party and thus accepting the European Union's bailout offer. With government cutbacks this means increased unemployment that now stands at twenty-three per cent and including fifty per cent for youth. It would seem that nothing could be more time wasting than searching for sanity in capitalism.

In such terrible economic conditions, the worst often raises its ugly head. In this case, the fascists make their entry onto the scene. In Germany during the chaos of the 1920s, it was the Nazis. In Greece, it is the Golden Dawn, who received 6.97% of the vote, resulting in eighteen seats. Though it denies it is a neo-Nazi party, its members make nazi salutes at rallies, Hitler's "Mein Kampf" has been displayed at its head office, and its leader, Nikos Michaloliakos, denies the holocaust. According to Sotiris Methenitis, the center-right mayor of Markopoulo, "Golden Dawn is not just another political party. This is an openly neo-Nazi party, a fascist party, and in the long term it will have grave consequences on Greece, on its society, and on its image abroad." Prior to the election, Methenitis begged electors to, "vote for anyone else."

Like fascists everywhere, Golden Dawn appeals to the emotions and confusion of the electorate, blaming any vulnerable group, such as immigrants, for the country's problems. By recruiting unemployed youth and giving them a scapegoat, Golden Dawn channels their resentment, gives them an institution within which they can feel important, and soothes their anxieties while using them. The exact number of immigrants isn't known because so many are there illegally, but there are over one million in a country of eleven million. Until four years ago, the majority was Albanian, but when crossing from Turkey became the easiest way into Europe, tens of thousands of unskilled, non-Greek speaking Africans, South Asians, and Arabs made their way to Greece. A European Union agreement allows countries to send immigrants back to the first European country they set foot in, which, more than fifty per cent of the time, is Greece.

Though some flee persecution in their homelands, the Greek government grants few of them refugee status. Only eleven of 15 928 claimants in 2009 were successful. It takes years to process such claims and the present backlog is more than thirty thousand. It is farcical to blame immigrants for unemployment when the majority themselves have the same problem. It is a win-win situation, however, for the capitalist class. They have an abundance of workers that reduces the price of labour and they can, through the media they own, easily stir up hate and antagonism between factions of the working class. Golden Dawn, whose very logo is a modified swastika, and whose slogan is 'Rid this Land of Filth', are, then, doing the dirty work for the capitalist class. In June, their supporters beat, among others, an Egyptian fisherman who had committed the heinous crime of sleeping on his roof.

If elected to power, Golden Dawn have pledged to plant landmines along the border with Turkey, deport all illegal immigrants, and conduct raids on hospitals and kindergartens to forcibly evict immigrant children. Obviously, fear is the dominant emotion among immigrants and they have taken to traveling in groups protection and deflect the harassing demands to go back to their own countries. Michaloliakos, in his post election speech, said, "The time for fear has come for those who betrayed this homeland. We are coming." It must be chilling for many minorities in Greece who remember that the Nazis had very little support in Germany in the beginning.

As socialists, as much as we deplore parties like Golden Dawn and their rhetoric, we take no sides in disputes about how capitalism can be administered. We believe to solve problems such as those mentioned above and most of the other major problems we face today, capitalism must go. Whether it is a party that believes in parliamentary democracy, or a party like Golden Dawn who would probably limit or abolish democracy, as fascists did in Germany and Spain, capitalism and its problems remain, although, of course, a democracy nominally allows for opposition and the establishment of a socialist movement and opposition. The tools of producing and distributing wealth will remain

***"All this proves that nothing fundamental changes in capitalism..."***



firmly in the hands of the capitalist class. Economic recessions, austerity, unemployment, insecurity and blaming the blameless will continue. All this proves that nothing fundamental changes in capitalism and come the inevitable economic downturns, parties like Golden Dawn will arise to peddle their pernicious nonsense. It is up to us, the world's workers, to work for a world where financial, racial, and sexual inequality cease to exist.



## Heads You Lose, Tails You Don't Win

The threat of homelessness, hangs over more Ontarians if the Provincial Government goes ahead and cuts the benefit package of \$114 million that helps people on welfare to pay emergency housing costs. Since the Liberal budget was approved in June, the community start-up and maintenance benefit will end in January. This program, operated by the welfare system, provides up to \$799 for a single person and up to \$1500 for a family. This can be used for various housing expenses including rent and utility arrears, first and last month's rent, furniture, and other household items. Almost two hundred thousand singles and families on welfare rely on this annual benefit to make ends meet.

Instead, the Ontario government is proposing that \$63 million (about half of what was spent last year) to be given to a new housing and homeless program to be run by the municipalities. This seems to be another scheme, similar to the days of the Conservative Harris government, of downloading services to the municipalities.

Activists and municipal housing and social service managers are upset because it pre-empts the province's Social Assistance Review Commission's report due in September; because they were not consulted; and because the new program won't meet the needs of those requiring assistance. No surprise!

According to Phil Brown, general manager of Toronto's Shelter, Support, and Housing Division, "We are very concerned and I think most, if not all, service managers across the province are equally concerned." (Toronto Star, June 22, 2012). Provincial Government documents say that the move is aimed at consolidating housing support programs under one ministry to "improve cost effectiveness and to make it more responsive to local needs." This, of course is the usual double-speak of politicians to put a positive spin on the cuts.

In the last two decades, Ontario has had governments of all three major parties and all have failed to cure the poverty problem and even failed to reduce the extent of it. The government claims it does not have the money and the economic situation is grim. Whichever way those on welfare turn, they lose. It seems strange that for decades our productivity, GDP, profits, and wealth have continued to rise and the richest few per cent have continued to see exponential increases in their personal fortunes and yet, when it comes to providing services for the mass of the people, we are always short of money to spend. That, of course, is the natural consequence of the capitalist system – a vast proportion of the wealth produced solely by the workers must go to the minority or there will be no production. In socialism, with free access for all to the store of community goods provided, poverty and welfare will be a thing of the past

## Is Capitalism a Mad System?

No rational, objective person could look at our world and say that it is perfect. In fact, only a few seconds contemplation would be needed to conclude that we have massive problems such as war, starvation, dire poverty on a large scale, and

impending ecological disaster on a global scale. If we were tackling these problems seriously and making progress, we might be satisfied with what we were doing but these very same problems have existed for decades and longer, proving that we are not taking them seriously. That they continue to exist amid plenty and the means to solve them is inexcusable, if not sheer madness. There is enough wealth in the world to provide everyone with a decent living standard; there is enough food produced in the world to feed everyone adequately; there is enough productive power in the world to provide the required number of hospitals, schools, medical facilities to service everyone.

Capitalism has brought incredible productive power to the human race but we can clearly see that it cannot deliver adequately. Capitalism's apologists continue to tell us that we must wait for the 'tide to raise all boats' but, obviously, some

boats ride high while the majority flounder; they tell us that the victims of starvation or poverty are themselves to blame as they have too many children or do not work hard or smart enough. But the Deprived World is an integral part of the capitalist system and has been from the beginning – it supplies the natural resources and cheap labour needed to create high profits. Thousand of manufacturing and technology companies have not left North America and Western Europe for the Cheap Labour World and abandoned their 'patriotic duty' for nothing. It pays well.

The operative word is PROFIT. In the capitalist system, a company cannot deliver goods to those who do not have money. They must do without even for necessities such as food and medical drugs to sustain life. The coercive laws of capitalism mean that one company cannot give an edge to a competitor by giving away product



# CAPITALISM:

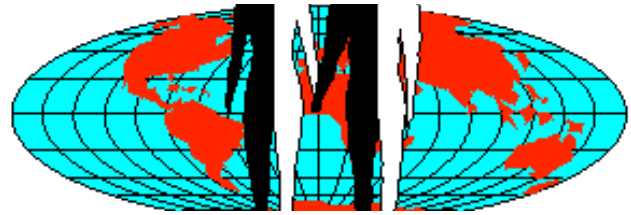
Bringing you lower quality and fewer choices since the 16th Century.

to the needy and foregoing profit. In fact, to operate properly, producers must attempt to balance supply and demand, must manage the flow of goods to the market so there is enough to meet effective (paying) demand but not too much to create a glut. Too much product, i.e. enough for everyone who really needs it, and the price will drop; keep the supply scarce and the price will rise. In manufacturing, lines of production and whole factories are brought into play or shut down at a moment's notice to keep this balance. This means that food is often left to rot, grain locked up in silos, and product is destroyed to prevent flooding the market.

But what could you do about something as large and immutable as housing? You can slow or stop building new houses, but if that doesn't work, then what? Cleveland, Ohio, has the answer, as noted in a recent CBC television documentary. Cleveland is, or was, a large industrial city on the south shore of Lake Erie and, as part of the American Rust Belt for many decades, has had its share of economic hardship. When the sub-prime mortgage crisis hit, it sank to the bottom. Solid brick bungalows from the fifties and sixties that would sell for \$300 000 to \$600 000 in the Toronto area, depending on location, were offered at \$79 000 in Cleveland and after receiving no showings for two years and more, plummeted to the \$29 000 region. The housing supply was high, the demand was low. No problem! The city set about putting it right. The solution : bulldoze ten thousand homes! The footage of large construction machines tearing down houses was stunning. 10 000! Problem solved!

Many of the houses were older in some disrepair, mostly because the homes had been re-possessed and the tenants thrown out. People who lived in the neighbourhoods where this happened, when interviewed, thought it was a good idea as it would raise their property values. That they are right tells us something about the sanity of a system that can call destroying homes sane. Many of the former residents would be living with friends or relatives or on the streets, ironically, in need of housing. But that is of no consequence to capital. It must yield a return on investment at all costs, and that includes food, housing, or even life itself. Is this madness, or what?

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## Lives Don't Count

An article entitled, "Blood On The Beaches" in the June 6 issue of The National Post revealed a long-held military secret, that in April, 1944, 946 Allied soldiers died in a training exercise in preparation for D- Day.

On that fateful night, 30 000 troops crowded into an amphibious landing craft and sailed to the designated landing site, Slapton Sands, on the English coast. The British cruiser, HMS Hawkins, opened fire sending more than six hundred men to their deaths at sea. The remaining casualties were soldiers who had landed while shells rained down on the sand dunes.

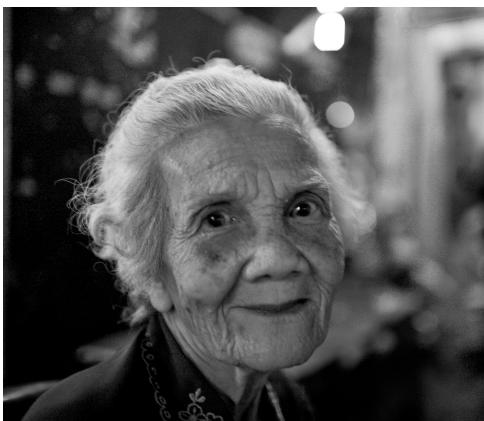
According to British historian, Giles Milton, "The supreme Allied commander, General Eisenhower, had ordered that real ammunition be used so that men would experience actual battlefield conditions. It was a disastrous decision, to say the least. Yet military mistakes have to be explained to make war more palatable to the general public. Milton informs us that they learned the need for, "...better life preservers, to an improved protocol for rescuing overboard men...all the different command structures and all the different ships involved in the D-Day landings, all these radio frequencies were standardized so that this type of miscommunication could never happen on the big day itself." Thus 946 men had to die so the military could learn how to communicate.

Milton concludes, "Though the sheer scale of the sacrifice made by a generation of Allied soldiers, sailors, and air men that fought and won WWII is difficult for members of today's relatively pampered generation to appreciate, we must do our best to try. And if not on June 6, then when?" Let's hope they never appreciate such loss of life. The moot point is, did these men die in vain, or not? From the viewpoint of the Western European and North American capitalist class, obviously not. They seem to have learned something about how to land an army on a beach-head. This was crucial in their need to



defeat the forces of German capitalism. When Germany emerged onto the world stage as a major industrial power, it was too late for them to carve out a great world empire needed as a market for their products and for raw materials as Britain, France and other Western powers had done before them. By the 1930s, Germany realized that the only way they could expand was to capture neighbouring lands. This would mean setting up a power block that would threaten the interests of the Western capitalists, who, on the threat of war, would be sure to tell the public that you should go to war to protect democracy, not the truth, you should go to war to protect my property, my factory, my interests. After the war more people lived under a dictatorship than before it. After the war the whole of the world's working class would continue to be exploited by the whole of the world's capitalist class just as before.

Milton makes light of the situation by saying that the casualty rate at Slapton was less than three per cent and we can be sure the capitalist class would be even more cavalier about it. However many soldiers died, one principle remains constant, whether it had been one death or all thirty thousand, the whole disgusting deal would not have justified the shedding of one drop of working class blood.



## Pension Security?

The Canadian Pension Plan is moving closer to a crisis every year. The combination of an aging population, the volatility of the Stock Market, and low interest rates is depleting the kitty. The

pension and benefits consulting firm, Towers Watson, said sixty-five per cent of pension plan sponsors believe the situation will worsen over the next year. Though they did not say it, the increase in unemployment means lower contributions. Ian Markham of Towers Watson said some are coping by moving their investments into safer assets such as bonds, even if it means accepting a lower return. What Mr. Markham neglected to say was that, these days, many haven't any spare cash to invest anywhere. Many private sector plans, including Air Canada and CP Rail, have a large gap between assets and liabilities. Only twenty-five per cent of Canadians in the private sector have a work-place pension plan according to Canadian Auto Workers President, Ken Lewenza. Only half of these have a defined benefit plan. The rest are covered by group RRSP, or defined contribution plans that transfer all of the risk onto the employees. Human Resources Minister, Diane Finley, tried to put a brave spin on it by saying, "There is no need for Canada to ratchet up the retirement age within the space of ten years." It will be interesting to see how the market performs in relation to Ms Findley's prediction. The unpredictability of the market means that even when you are retired, and collecting pension cheques, there is no security. That's the nature of capitalism.

## Shell Shocked!

An article in the Toronto Star of June 23 focused on one of capitalism's more unsavoury aspects and did so without critical comment. The Canadian Ministry of Defence is hoping that recently advanced medical technology can cure soldiers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, PTSD, in other words, shell shock. Defence Research and Development Canada, the scientific agency involved, will spend a quarter of a million dollars to ascertain if there is credence in studies conducted at the University of Minnesota, i.e., that PTSD can be detected through magnetic fields given off by electrical impulses in the brain. This study is based on research that detected various patterns of brain activity that was observed in twenty per cent of US and Canadian soldiers that were diagnosed with PTSD.

The technology used is a magnetoencephalographic machine (MEG). This device has been used to map the magnetic impulses of disorders that include schizophrenia, multiple sclerosis, and alzheimer's disease. This work began as a team under Dr. Apostolos Georgopoulos, a University of Minnesota neuroscientist. They found that the memory of traumatic events was caused by electrical activity in the right temporal lobe of the brain.

Before this research was undertaken, the difficulty faced was that PTSD cases also suffered from problems that many who had never been in the forces had such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. Though MEG diagnosis may help them overcome that and determine who does and who does not have PTSD, it is not clear how it will treat the afflicted. One may assume therapy and medication will still be needed. Nevertheless, Dr. Brian Engdahl, a professor of psychology at the University of Minnesota said, "There are those in remission, the magnetic signature of their brains is different."

The Canadian Defence Department intends to carry out the MEG diagnostic scans on Canadian soldiers who have been diagnosed with PTSD and others who have suffered minor brain injuries such as concussion. It should surprise no one that when capitalists invest money in anything, they want a return of one sort or another. This situation is no different. To quote a Ministry of Defence spokesperson, "Getting a handle on the new procedure and being able to see how well patients respond to treatment is critical to help them with their recovery and determine when they can be safely re-deployed."

Not a word was said about helping them to re-adapt to civilian life, a major problem with ex-military, but we can expect no better from upholders of a system that trains people to kill each other while pursuing the interests of the owning class. At least it gives the lie to those who claim humans are naturally warlike. If they were the system would have no problem with training soldiers to kill.



## The Price of Progress

A recent report in "Lancet", the journal of the British medical association, focused on the high rate of suicide in that rapidly developing economic giant, India. According to The World Health Organization, the US had 37 790 suicides in 2010, or a rate of 12.2 per 100 000, whereas India's rate was 16. If the truth was known, the figure would be higher considering that many suicides are not reported by family members owing to the accompanying shame, and that suicide is illegal in India. The Lancet article says that suicide rates are highest in the 15-29 year-old age group, particularly in southern areas that are more industrially developed, with better education, welfare, and health care, presumably the best places for young people to grow up.

No study has been made to define the reason for the increase, though one of the authors of the article, Dr. Vikram Patel, expressed his opinion, "The higher rates may come from the greater likelihood of disappointments when aspirations that define success and happiness are distorted or unmet by the reality faced by young people in a rapidly changing society." India has experienced two decades of an economic boom that has brought with it more opportunities for advancement but also more job anxiety and more pressure to succeed.

Though many young people take advantage of the opportunities for advancement and then suffer the anxieties of competing in a ruthless market, they can no longer turn to traditional family units for support. New technologies like cell phones and social networking sites have broken down such age-old bastions of support and relief and have made loneliness common. Defenders of capitalism emphasize that anyone can, if they have what it takes, make a fortune and, conversely, if one doesn't have it, it proves inadequacy. What these people do not emphasize is even more significant – that pell-mell cutthroat competitiveness of capitalism heightens and intensifies the insecurities of those doing well within it, as well as those who are not; that many who are doing well go under in business with the introduction of new technologies; that with the equation of economic failure and personal failure, mental health problems are rampant.



What India is experiencing now is what previous industrial giants have experienced in the past and are still going through. Given that production is for profit and money is essential to procure necessary goods, the results are the same everywhere the capitalist mode of production is established. What is needed is an economic system where profits, competitiveness, insecurity, money, and wages will not exist; a system that will uplift people, not make them feel inadequate to the point of worthlessness. That system is the socialist system of economic and social organization.



## *To Unionize or Not?*

During June, the Toronto press widely reported that construction and maintenance workers were told to campaign for school board trustees and Liberal members of the Provincial Government by their union leaders who themselves provided donations to the same politicians. An analysis conducted by the Toronto Star showed that Jimmy Hazel, the head of the Maintenance and Construction Skilled Trades Council, donated \$118 000 to trustees and Liberal MPPs.

During the last four years, the donations, reported The Star, came from Hazel's council, Hazel and his executives personally, and the unions that make up the council that has a contract with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). One carpenter told the Star that his job hours were cut off after he refused to put up Liberal Party signs during the last provincial election. School Board trustees have received donations from Hazel and his affiliates, usually as a \$750 cheque. Trustee Sheila Ward received \$6 000 towards her campaigns in 2006 and 2010. The trustees are being tight-lipped about the affair except for one who said that, during his campaign, Hazel arranged for union members to deliver 5 000 of his pamphlets in his riding. This councillor also accepted \$1 250 in donations from Hazel and his partners.

In a moment of amazing gall, Hazel wrote a letter to Chris Spence, TDSB education director, complaining about one principal who had objected to the high cost of the Trades Council

work. The Star investigators found out that time sheets were padded with additional hours to account for workers who do not show up or leave early. For example, only four hours are needed to install an electrical outlet, but seventy-two hours were added making the entire bill \$3 000. Eight skilled workers were fired after being found in bars, in Tim Horton's coffee shops, or, in one instance, handing out flyers for a home-based business using school board equipment.

Hazel has threatened to use his influence to get the complaining principal fired and has hired a former Liberal Party official to advise him in his dealings with the media. A Highly frustrated Chris Spence asked, "What am I going to do about Hazel? We are working in a highly unionized environment. We have to work with our unionized partners.

If there is any substance to The Star's findings, this is another, albeit blatant, example of the fact that unions are an integral part of capitalism. The most unions can accomplish is to get higher wages, shorter hours, and better benefits. In other words, they function within the status quo. Unions work more effectively in a time of full employment but are rendered powerless when a company transfers its plant to a country where labour-power is cheaper. The fact that union membership has declined in the western, industrialized countries is a testament to this.

Nor can it be argued, as some of our Left Wing critics do, that unions can be used as a means to establish socialism. For a union to be in any way effective, it must embrace within its ranks people of all shades of political opinion, including those who strongly believe in capitalism. To suggest that unions can take over and run factories before socialism is established at the ballot box is to invite the government to use the armed forces of the nation to crush their efforts. That a union would give such blatant support to a pro-capitalist party only reinforces the above arguments. If there is any truth to the allegations of dishonesty, it's a reflection on a society that creates greed and adds further fuel to the argument that we need a society where there will be no need for unions because we will all be owners. We can say that in capitalism workers need to join together and present a united front against the encroachments on their time, wages, and benefits, but union activity will never get rid of the root cause of our troubles – capitalism.

# ***SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA***

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## **PLATFORM**

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.**

From this statement, it naturally follows that a socialist society must be one without social classes, states, central governments, money, trade, wage-labour, or employment, and must include voluntary labour and free access to all goods and services produced by society for all, based on their own self-determined needs.

The immense productive powers of capitalism have long since reached a stage where the establishment of socialism has been possible but because of the fetters of the financial market and the profit system it is unable to deliver what socialism can. Socialism has never been tried and it should be noted that what passed for socialism/communism in the former Soviet Union, and what is now taking place in China, Cuba et al, has none of the features of a socialist society. Rather, as we observed in 1918, what took place in Russia and subsequently in other countries called socialist was a form of capitalism run by the state with all the features of the capitalist mode of production - a monetary system, wage-labour, exploitation by the extraction of the surplus-value produced by the workers, state coercion, alienation of the

worker from his product, and so on.

The Socialist Party of Canada does not advocate reformism, i.e. a platform of reforms with the aim of gradually reforming capitalism into a system that works for all. While we are happy to see the worker's lot improved, reforms can never lead to the establishment of socialism and tends to bleed energy, ideas, and resources from that goal. Reforms fought for can, and frequently are, taken away or watered down. Rather than attempting gradual transformation of the capitalist system, something we hold is impossible and has been proven by a century of reformist platforms of so-called workers' parties which have led instead to the reform of such parties themselves to accept capitalism, we believe that only socialism can end forever the problems of our present society such as war, poverty, starvation, inadequate health care and housing, insecurity, and environmental degradation.

**THE SOCIALIST  
PARTY OF CANADA**  
**is part of the World Socialist Movement**



**Our socialist founding declaration of principles and object, first published in 1904, is still as valid and correct today:**

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## **OBJECT**

**"The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.**

## **Declaration of Principles**

The Socialist Party of Canada holds

**That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.**

**That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.**

**That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.**

**That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.**

**That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.**

**That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists**

**only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.**

**That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.**

**The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom."**



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